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12 October 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: SE-48: Capabilities and Probable Course of Action
of the ROK with Respect to an Armistice

Background

1. This estimate was requested by the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, on 24 July 1953 on an urgent basis. The IAC approved its preparation on 4 August (IAC-46-115), and requested the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army, to contact FECOM for assistance on operational questions.

2. FECOM complied by furnishing an excellent contribution; a special contribution was also obtained from DD/P/PI.

Substance

3. Except for one key question, there is general concurrence with the estimates contained in SE-48.

4. This exception concerns the probable response of the ROK military leaders should President Rhee order the ROK armed forces unilaterally to attack the Communists. The estimate in the present text rests largely on the information obtained from FECOM and is supported by the Board and by all the agencies with the exception of the Department of State. The estimate on this question is also supported by the DD/P/PI contribution.

5. The State representative maintains: (a) that Rhee's ability to control the ROK armed forces is not so great as estimated; and (b) that the possibility exists that the principal ROK military leaders would disobey and might even attempt to depose President Rhee in the event that he ordered an attack against the Communists which in their opinion would not necessarily be fully supported by the US.

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6. The Department of State can therefore be expected to present proposed revisions to paragraph 1 of the Conclusions (and corresponding paragraphs 6 and 8 of the Discussion).

7. State's position rests in part on State telegram 308, a copy of which is attached.

SHERMAN KRAFT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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